

Quick Guide to the Maine BRFSS Web Query System

(Last update: July 9, 2012)

The Maine BRFSS Web Query System is designed to provide easy access to results from Maine's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data. Users can select from a wide array of health and behavioral indicators that are included in the BRFSS surveys. Results are available for all of Maine, by county, by health district, or by demographic characteristics such as age, sex or income. The Web Query currently includes data from 2000 through 2010, and will be updated annually as new data becomes available.

This Quick Guide is a brief tutorial on how to use the Maine BRFSS Web Query System. The Web Query is easy to use and has two search options: Basic Query and Advanced Query. Each type of query is described in detail with an example below.

[Note: You arrived here at the Quick Guide from the link on the Contents page (see below) or from a button available at the bottom of each Basic Query or Advanced Query selection page. If this is a mistake and you want to proceed directly through the query, just click the "go back" arrow on the upper left to return.]

Basic Query

Contents Page: Opening the Web Query will bring you to the Contents page (Figure 1). To start a Basic Query, just read and select (click on) the topic area of interest. For example, if you are interested in learning more about diabetes prevalence in Maine, look in the "Chronic Diseases" area box and click on "Diabetes". This will take you to the Basic Query page for diabetes (Figure 2, next page).

Figure 1: Contents Page



Basic Query Page: The Basic Query page includes a list of Maine BRFSS questions whose data results are available in the Web Query for a specific topic. (There are separate Basic Query pages for each of the categories listed on the Contents page shown in Figure 1.) In this example, diabetes questions are listed.

Figure 2: Basic Query Page (Diabetes)

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Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
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Chronic Diseases - Diabetes

BRFSS Survey Data Results

Step One : Select a question :

☒ Make a selection below

Pre Diabetes

☐ Have you had a test for high blood sugar or diabetes within the past three years?

☐ Have you ever been told by doctor that you have pre-diabetes or borderline diabetes?

Diabetes

☒ Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes?

☐ Duration of diabetes. (Asked only to diabetics)

Diabetes Care

☐ Have you ever taken a class or course to manage your diabetes?(Asked only to diabetics)

☐ When was the last time you had an eye exam in which the pupils were dilated ? (Asked only to diabetics)

☐ Are you now taking insulin? (Asked only to diabetics)

Step Two : Select only one from the list below (Default is Statewide):

☒ Statewide ☐ Sex (Male, Female)

☐ County ☐ Employment (Employed, Unemployed)

☐ District ☐ Income (<15k, 15-24k, 25-34k, 35-49k, 50k+)

☐ Age (18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65+) ☐ Education (< High school, High school, Some college, College degree or more)

☐ Age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+) ☐ Sex by Age

☐ Sex by Income

Step Three: Select Year(s) (Review year availability at the bottom of each output page after submitting)

☒ 2010 ☒ 2009 ☐ 2008 ☐ 2007 ☐ 2006 ☐ 2005 ☐ 2004 ☐ 2003 ☐ 2002 ☐ 2001 ☐ 2000

Step Four : Submit query or choose other options.

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Step One: Select a Question. Once at the Basic Query page, you must select a question (click the circle to the left of the question) for which you want data. For this example, click the circle next to “Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes?” Note that selecting a question is required. Failure to select a question will result in an error message.

Step Two: Optional Demographics Selection. You next have the option of choosing a demographic group for the query, such as the prevalence of diabetes in each Maine county. If you want county data, click the circle to the left of “County” under Step Two. If you don’t select an option, the default will be state level data. You can only select one demographic option at a time.

Step Three: Optional Year Selection. The next step is to select the year (or years) for which you want results. The default is the most current year (2010). It is important to note the year(s) selected for the query since that will help you evaluate the results. In some cases questions are not available each year, and some analysis might best be conducted by using multiple years. For example, to get county-level results it is often necessary to include multiple years of data. You can select any number of years, but generally people want the most recent year(s). If you select multiple years you will have a weighted average (capital N) for those years in your results. The percent will also be a weighted average. For this example, select 2010 and 2009.

Step Four: Submit Query. When you are ready to run the query, click the “Submit Query” button at the bottom of the page, or press Enter on your keyboard.

Basic Query Results: After a moment or two of processing, the Web Query will display your results. If the question you selected is available in the selected year(s), then results page will include a table with the prevalence of the condition/behavior, and a legend to assist in understanding the results (Figure 3).

Basic Query Trend Results: In this example where we requested statewide results for multiple years, the Web Query displays the results separately for each year, and also the weighted average results for all the selected years combined. Note that selecting the “statewide” demographic grouping in Step Two is the only situation in which the Web Query calculates and presents separate results by year when multiple years are selected in Step Three. If you want to look at results over time for any demographic grouping smaller than the state (such as by county or sex), you need to run separate queries – changing the individual year selected between queries.

Figure 3: Basic Query Results – Prevalence Table with Legend

Maine BRFSS Results Diabetes					
Years	Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	n	N	Percent	Confidence Interval
2009	Yes	909	87,232	8.3	(7.7 - 9.0)
	No	7,167	957,814	91.7	(91.0 - 92.3)
2010	Yes	958	90,495	8.7	(8.0 - 9.3)
	No	7,165	954,714	91.3	(90.7 - 92.0)
Combined Years	Yes	1,867	88,863	8.5	(8.0 - 9.0)
	No	14,332	956,264	91.5	(91.0 - 92.0)

Legend:
n = Number of respondents interviewed ages 18 and older in the population group you selected
N = Population estimate or estimated number of Maine adults in the group chosen
N for the Combined Years or Total row is the average of population for the years selected
Percent = Percentages are weighted to be representative of the Maine adult population (ages 18 and older), i.e. Percents are based on N and not n
CI = 95% Confidence Interval: the range of values that has a 95% probability of including the true, but unknown, value
** = Data suppressed due to data unavailability OR numerator < 5 OR denominator < 50 OR confidence interval > 20 points
Additional information is available in the Quick Guide

Below the legend, a Data Availability table shows the years for which the selected question is available, and the years for which it was requested. The “Requested” row of the Data Availability table in Figure 4 confirms that you selected 2009 and 2010 for the query. The “Available” row shows that the diabetes question was included and data is available for the years 2000 through 2010.

** You should always check the Data Availability table first to verify that the question is available in all the years you selected, particularly when you select multiple years for a query. As long as data is available for at least one of the years selected, the Web Query will run and produce results. However, the results will only be for years in which the question is available. Unless you check the Data Availability table, you may not realize that certain years were not included by the Web Query, and incorrectly report the years included in your analysis. In the example below, if the diabetes question had not been asked in 2010, the prevalence results given by the Web Query would have been based only on the 2009 data, even though both 2009 and 2010 were selected. To correctly interpret the prevalence estimates from the Web Query, it is important to review the Data Availability table to identify the data year(s) that were included in the analysis. The Data Availability table is the only source for this information in the Web Query.

Figure 4: Basic Query Results – Data Availability

Data Availability Information												
NAME	Data	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	Requested										Y	Y
Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	Available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend:
N = No, data not available, Y = Yes, data is available

Source: BRFSS

This request took 2.75 seconds of real time (v9.1 build 1461).

Important Notes:

If the results page does not include any prevalence estimates, this is most likely because you selected a question that is not available for that year (or years). In this case, the Web Query will produce only a Data Availability table on the results page. By noting the years of data availability, then going back to the Basic Query page for the topic, you can change the selected year(s) and re-run the query.

If your results include some data table areas that are not shown or filled with “**”, this is due to the required suppression of certain results (see legend). Suppression is a necessary hiding of the data when the results are not statistically reliable.

Environmental Health estimates: Questions related to the environmental health of respondents (e.g. “Is there a carbon monoxide detector in your home?”) appear on both the Maine Health Districts and Environmental Health pages of the Web Query. The estimated percentages for all the environmental health items are weighted to represent the percentage of all households in Maine. Environmental health questions are the only items that are weighted at the household level. All other questions in the Web Query are weighted to represent the percentage of all individual adults.

Advanced Query

The Advanced Query provides for two-way analysis or “crosstabs” in addition to the demographic/ domain selection and year selection.

To start an Advanced Query, first select a topic of interest from the Contents page. As before, this will take you to the Basic Query page for the chosen topic. Then click the link to the “Advanced Query”, using the button on the bottom of each Basic Query page (see Figure 2 above).

Step One: Select Two Questions. Once at the Advanced Query page for your chosen topic, you must select two questions for which you want data (Figure 5). For this example, select “Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes?” (row A) for Question 1, and “3 category Body Mass Index” (row G) for Question 2. Note that selecting two questions is required. Failure to select two questions will result in an error message.

Step Two: Optional Demographics Selection. You next have the option of choosing a demographic group for the query, such as the prevalence of diabetes by BMI in each Maine county. If you want county data, click the circle to the left of “County” under Step Two. If you don’t select an option, the default will be state level data. You can only select one demographic option at a time.

Step Three: Optional Year Selection. The next step is to select the year (or years) for which you want results. The default is the most current year (2010). It is important to note the year(s) selected for the query since that will help you evaluate the results. In some cases questions are not available each year, and some analysis might best be conducted by using multiple years. For example, to get county-level results it is often necessary to include multiple years of data. You can select any number of years, but generally people want the most recent year(s). If you select multiple years you will have a weighted average (capital N) for those years in your results. The percent will also be a weighted average.

Step Four: Submit Query. When you are ready to run the query, click the “Submit Query” button at the bottom of the page, or press Enter on your keyboard.

Figure 5: Advanced Query Page (Diabetes)

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Chronic Diseases - Diabetes

Step One : Select two questions :

Q1	Q2	Question Description
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	For advanced analysis, choose both a Question 1 and a Question 2
A) <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes?
B) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Have you ever taken a class or course to manage your diabetes? (Asked only to diabetics).
C) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Duration of diabetes.(Asked only to diabetics)
D) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	When was the last time you had an eye exam in which the pupils were dilated? (Asked only to diabetics)
E) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are you now taking insulin? (Asked only to diabetics)
F) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Those with symptoms of current depression (PHQ8).
G) <input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3 category Body Mass Index (Obese / Overweight / Neither)
H) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Any physical activity in the past month..
I) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ever told had angina or coronary heart disease, heart attack or myocardial infarction, or stroke?
J) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Consume 5 or more servings of fruits or vegetables per day.
K) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Do you have any health coverage, including health insurance, prepaid or government plans?
L) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Risk factor for heavy drinking.
M) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Health status (Poor-Fair, Good-V Good-Excellent).
N) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Asthma status .
O) <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	At risk for current smoking.

Step Two: Select only one from the list below. (Default is Statewide):

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Statewide	<input type="radio"/> Sex (Male, Female)
<input type="radio"/> County	<input type="radio"/> Employment (Employed, Unemployed)
<input type="radio"/> District	<input type="radio"/> Income (<15k, 15-24k, 25-34k, 35-49k, 50k+)
<input type="radio"/> Age (18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65+)	<input type="radio"/> Education (< High school, High school, Some college, College degree or more)
<input type="radio"/> Age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+)	<input type="radio"/> Sex by Age
	<input type="radio"/> Sex by Income

Step Three : Select Year(s) (Review year availability at the bottom of each output page after submitting)

☐ 2010
 ☐ 2009
 ☐ 2008
 ☐ 2007
 ☐ 2006
 ☐ 2005
 ☐ 2004
 ☐ 2003
 ☐ 2002
 ☐ 2001
 ☐ 2000

Step Four : Submit query or choose other options.

Submit Query

Basic Query

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Advanced Query Results: After a moment or two of processing, the Web Query will display your results. If the questions you selected are both available in the selected year(s), then results page will include a table with the prevalence of the condition/behavior and a legend to assist in understanding the results (Figure 6). (Notice that the results for the Advanced Query contain separate columns for each question.) Below the legend, two separate Data Availability tables shows the years for which the selected questions are available, and the years for which they were requested (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Advanced Query Results – Prevalence Table with Legend

Maine BRFSS Results					
Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	Body mass index in categories	n	N	Percent	Confidence Interval
No	Obese	1,695	226,063	24.4	(23.1 - 25.8)
No	Overweight	2,632	342,418	37.0	(35.5 - 38.6)
No	Neither overweight nor obese	2,585	356,119	38.5	(36.9 - 40.1)
Yes	Obese	513	50,459	58.4	(54.6 - 62.2)
Yes	Overweight	268	24,374	28.2	(24.8 - 31.6)
Yes	Neither overweight nor obese	127	11,546	13.4	(10.7 - 16.0)

Legend:
n = Number of respondents interviewed ages 18 and older in the population group you selected
N = Population estimate or estimated number of Maine adults in the group chosen
N for the Combined Years or Total row is the average of population for the years selected
Percent = Percentages are weighted to be representative of the Maine adult population (ages 18 and older), i.e. Percents are based on N and not n
CI = 95% Confidence Interval: the range of values that has a 95% probability of including the true, but unknown, value
** = Data suppressed due to data unavailability OR numerator < 5 OR denominator < 50 OR confidence interval > 20 points
Additional information is available in the Quick Guide

** As in the Basic Query, you should always check the Data Availability tables first to verify that both questions are available in all the years you requested. When multiple years are selected for the Advanced Query, results will only be given for years where both Question 1 and Question 2 are available. Unless you check the Data Availability table, you may not realize that certain years were left out by the Web Query because one or both questions were not available. To correctly interpret the prevalence estimates from the Web Query, it is important to review the Data Availability table to identify the data year(s) that were included in the analysis. The Data Availability table is the only source for this information in the Web Query.

Figure 7: Advanced Query Results – Data Availability

Data Availability Information												
Question 1												
NAME	Data	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	Requested											Y
Have you ever been told by a doctor that you have diabetes	Available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend:
N = No data available, Y = Yes data available

Question 2												
NAME	Data	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Body mass index in categories	Requested											Y
Body mass index in categories	Available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend:
N = No data available, Y = Yes data available

Source: BRFSS

If the results page does not include any prevalence estimates, this is most likely because one or both questions you selected were not available for that year. Check the Data Availability tables to see which years both questions are available, then go back to the Advanced Query page for the topic, change the year selection, and re-run the query.

For additional guidance or to report a problem: If you have any problems or questions about the Web Query, please contact Kip Neale, Maine BRFSS Coordinator at Kip.Neale@Maine.gov

Visit our Maine BRFSS home page where you will find a link to an interesting short course about interpreting BRFSS data, our Maine BRFSS Data Dictionary, and a listing of all our Maine questions by year.

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/brfss/index.shtml>